

**American Board of Forensic Anthropology, Inc.**  
**Policies and Procedures Manual**  
**Revised 29 March 2020**

**Important Links:**

- [ABFA Fee Schedule](#)
- [Application Guidelines](#)
- [Guidelines for Case File Submission](#)
- [Certification Examination Guidelines](#)

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Section I</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>A. <a href="#">Background, Functions and Purposes of ABFA</a></b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Section II</b>	
<b>A. <a href="#">Bylaws</a></b>	<b>4</b>
<b><a href="#">Article I Definitions</a></b>	<b>4</b>
<b><a href="#">Article II Name and Purposes</a></b>	<b>5</b>
<b><a href="#">Article III Sponsors</a></b>	<b>5</b>
<b><a href="#">Article IV Offices</a></b>	<b>5</b>
<b><a href="#">Article V Officers</a></b>	<b>6</b>
<b><a href="#">Article VI Board of Directors</a></b>	<b>7</b>
<b><a href="#">Article VII Executive Committee</a></b>	<b>7</b>
<b><a href="#">Article VIII Committees</a></b>	<b>7</b>
<b><a href="#">Article IX Elections and Terms of Office</a></b>	<b>7</b>
<b><a href="#">Article X Indemnification and Surety</a></b>	<b>8</b>
<b><a href="#">Article XI Meetings and Operations</a></b>	<b>9</b>
<b><a href="#">Article XII Finances</a></b>	<b>9</b>
<b><a href="#">Article XIII Certification</a></b>	<b>10</b>
<b><a href="#">Article XIV Parliamentary Authority</a></b>	<b>11</b>
<b><a href="#">Article XV Seal and Insignia</a></b>	<b>11</b>
<b><a href="#">Article XVI Amendments</a></b>	<b>11</b>
<b><a href="#">Article XVII Effective Date of Bylaws</a></b>	<b>12</b>
<b>B. <a href="#">Code of Ethics and Conduct</a></b>	<b>13</b>
<b><a href="#">Section I The Code</a></b>	<b>13</b>
<b><a href="#">Section II Grounds for Discipline</a></b>	<b>13</b>
<b><a href="#">Section III Investigative Body</a></b>	<b>14</b>
<b><a href="#">Section IV Investigation Initiating Action</a></b>	<b>14</b>
<b><a href="#">Section V Judiciary Process</a></b>	<b>15</b>
<b><a href="#">Section VI Request For Reinstatement</a></b>	<b>16</b>
<b><a href="#">Section VI Confidentiality, Rules, and Procedures</a></b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Section III <a href="#">Policies and Procedures</a></b>	<b>18</b>
<b>A. <a href="#">Administrative Information</a></b>	<b>18</b>
<b>a. <a href="#">Elected Officers</a></b>	<b>18</b>
<b>a. <a href="#">President</a></b>	<b>18</b>

b. <a href="#">Vice President</a>	19
c. <a href="#">Secretary</a>	19
d. <a href="#">Treasurer</a>	20
B. <a href="#">Board of Directors</a>	21
C. <a href="#">Committees</a>	21
1. <a href="#">Standing Committees</a>	21
a. <a href="#">Executive Committee</a>	21
b. <a href="#">Ethics Committee</a>	21
c. <a href="#">Examination Committees</a>	22
d. <a href="#">Recertification Committee</a>	24
e. <a href="#">Nomination Committee</a>	24
f. <a href="#">Application Committee</a>	24
g. <a href="#">FSAB Compliance Committee</a>	25
h. <a href="#">Exam Appeal Committee</a>	25
2. <a href="#">Diplomates-at-Large</a>	25
D. <a href="#">ABFA Fees</a>	26
E. <a href="#">Application, Examination, and Certification Policies and Procedures</a>	27
1. <a href="#">Function</a>	27
2. <a href="#">General Provisions Concerning Certification</a>	27
3. <a href="#">Maintaining Diplomat Status</a>	28
4. <a href="#">Application to Sit for Certification Examination</a>	29
a. <a href="#">Requirements of the Applicant</a>	29
b. <a href="#">The Application Process</a>	29
c. <a href="#">The Application</a>	29
d. <a href="#">Application Format</a>	30
e. <a href="#">ABFA Guidelines for Case File Submission</a>	31
f. <a href="#">Additional Elements for Case File Submission</a>	33
g. <a href="#">Reapplication Procedure</a>	34
5. <a href="#">The Certification Examination in Forensic Anthropology</a>	36
a. <a href="#">Examination Committees</a>	36
b. <a href="#">The Certification Examination</a>	36
c. <a href="#">Grading</a>	38
d. <a href="#">Re-examination</a>	38
e. <a href="#">Special Accommodations</a>	38
f. <a href="#">Examination Appeal Process</a>	38
g. <a href="#">Diplomate of the ABFA</a>	40
6. <a href="#">Recertification</a>	41
1. <a href="#">Purpose</a>	41
2. <a href="#">Scope</a>	41
3. <a href="#">Terms and Definitions</a>	41
4. <a href="#">Recertification Requirements</a>	41
5. <a href="#">Recertification Procedure</a>	41
6. <a href="#">Lapse in Certification (Decertification)</a>	41
7. <a href="#">Retirement Status</a>	43

**American Board of Forensic Anthropology, Inc.**  
**Diplomate Manual**  
**Section I**

**Background, Function, and Purposes of the  
American Board of Forensic Anthropology**

The American Board of Forensic Anthropology (ABFA) was incorporated in 1977 to encourage the study and practice of, establish and enhance standards for, and generally advance the science of forensic anthropology. This Diplomate Manual was originally created in 2007 to codify past practices and procedures and to make policies known to Diplomates of the ABFA, those who have applied to become certified, those who wish to apply for certification, and to the general public. Since that time, the manual has undergone periodic updates.

The mission of the ABFA is:

- (a) To encourage the study of, improve the practice of, establish and enhance standards for, and advance the science of forensic anthropology;
- (b) To encourage and promote adherence to high standards of ethics, conduct, and professional practice in forensic anthropology;
- (c) To grant and issue certificates, and/or other recognition, in cognizance of special qualifications in forensic anthropology to voluntary applicants who conform to the standards established by the Board and who have established their fitness and competence therefore;
- (d) To maintain and furnish lists of individuals who have been granted certificates by the Board (hereinafter referred to as Diplomates);
- (e) To inform the appropriate branches of federal and state governments and private agencies and organizations of the existence and nature of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology and the professional quality of its Diplomates for the practice of forensic anthropology;
- (f) To engage in any activities, not prohibited by law or the Board's Articles of Incorporation, which may contribute to the above purposes or which are in furtherance of the objects and purposes enumerated in the Articles of Incorporation.

**American Board of Forensic Anthropology, Inc.**  
**Diplomate Manual**  
**Section II**

**BYLAWS**

Approved by the Board on 20 February, 1990  
Approved by legal counsel 16 May, 1990  
Revised 17 March, 2007  
Approved by the Board on 17 March, 2007  
Revised 22 January, 2008  
Approved by the Board on 23 January, 2008  
Revised 29 June, 2012  
Approved by the Board on 3 July, 2012  
Revised 11 March, 2013  
Approved by the Board 11 March, 2013  
Revised 13 May, 2014  
Approved by the Active Members 19 June, 2014

AMERICAN BOARD OF FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY, INC.  
BYLAWS

Article I  
Definitions

**Section 1.** All definitions of terms and words herein, unless applicable law otherwise requires, shall be as defined by the Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, or the Board of Directors, in that order of precedence.

**Section 2.** Forensic anthropology shall be defined as the application of the science of physical anthropology and archaeology to the legal process.

**Section 3.** Unless otherwise specified a quorum shall consist of a majority of the Board of Directors.

**Section 4.** “Active Members” of the ABFA shall include all living individuals who hold a non-retired Certificate of Qualification in Forensic Anthropology as awarded by the Board of Directors and who are also in good standing as determined by the Board of Directors.

Article II  
Name and Purposes

**Section 1.** Name. The name of this organization shall be the AMERICAN BOARD OF FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY, INC.; hereinafter referred to as the “ABFA”, or the “Corporation”.

**Section 2.** Purposes. The purposes of the ABFA, in the public interest, shall be:

- (a) to encourage the study of, improve the practice of, establish and enhance standards for, and advance the science of forensic anthropology;

- (b) to encourage and promote adherence to high standards of ethics, conduct, and professional practice in forensic anthropology;
- (c) to grant and issue certificates, and/or other recognition, in cognizance of special qualifications in forensic anthropology to voluntary applicants who conform to the standards established by the ABFA and who have established their fitness and competence therefore;
- (d) to inform the appropriate branches of federal and state governments and private agencies and organizations of the existence and nature of the ABFA and the professional quality of its members for the practice of forensic anthropology;
- (e) to maintain and furnish lists of individuals who have been granted certificates by the Board (hereinafter referred to as Diplomates);
- (f) to engage in any activities, not prohibited by law or the ABFA's Articles of Incorporation, which may contribute to the above purposes or which are in furtherance of the objects and purposes enumerated in the Articles of Incorporation.

### ARTICLE III Sponsors

**Section 1. Initial Sponsors.** The ABFA was initially sponsored by the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and The Forensic Sciences Foundation, Inc. The ABFA is currently an independent, self-sufficient organization with no sponsors.

**Section 2. Other Sponsors.** The Board of Directors may, by affirmative vote of the Directors, invite organizations having a legitimate interest in forensic anthropology to become sponsors of the ABFA.

**Section 3. Termination of Sponsorship.** A sponsoring organization may, in its discretion, terminate its sponsorship of the ABFA upon due notice to the ABFA. Such sponsorship may also be terminated by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Directors.

**Section 4. Responsibility of Sponsors.** A sponsoring organization shall not have any obligations for financial support of the ABFA and shall not, by virtue of its sponsorship of the ABFA, have authority over or responsibility for any of the ABFA's operations or activities. The principal role of a sponsoring organization or organizations is to endorse and support the objectives of the ABFA and to give recognition to the ABFA's activities and programs.

### ARTICLE IV Offices

**Section 1. Office of Record.** The office of record of the ABFA shall be in the city of Washington, District of Columbia, at 910 17<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., Suite 717, Washington, D.C. 20006.

**Section 2. Other Offices.** The ABFA may have such other offices at such locations, within or without the District of Columbia, as the Board of Directors may, from time to time, designate.

### ARTICLE V Officers

**Section 1. Officers of the Corporation.** The Officers of the Corporation shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. They shall be elected by the Board of Directors from its membership.

Section 2. Officers of the Board of Directors. The Officers of the Corporation shall serve, in the same respective capacities, as Officers of the Board of Directors of the Corporation.

Section 3. Functions and Duties. The functions and duties of the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be such as usually and customarily pertain to their respective offices, and also such other functions and duties as may, from time to time, be delegated or designated by the Board of Directors or as are herein prescribed.

## ARTICLE VI Board of Directors

Section 1. Authority. The governing body of the Corporation shall be a Board of Directors, which shall be empowered to have, hold, control, manage and administer all of the property, funds, business, affairs and operations of the ABFA pursuant to its Articles of Incorporation, with authority to do everything necessary and desirable in the conduct of the affairs and business of the ABFA and in accordance with these Bylaws.

Section 2. Composition. The Board of Directors shall consist of at least five (5) and not more than fifteen (15) Directors. Directors shall be nominated and elected by the active Members of the ABFA via majority affirmative vote.

Section 3. Qualifications of Directors.

- (a) directors shall be chosen and elected with due regard for their general attainments and their professional qualifications and experience in forensic anthropology and/or closely related fields;
- (b) every person elected as a Director shall be an active Member of the ABFA; provided, however, that one (1) position on the Board of Directors may be held by a duly qualified attorney-at-law who shall not be required to be an active Member of the ABFA;
- (c) any active Member of the ABFA may be elected as a member of the Board of Directors whenever an eligible vacancy exists, except as noted in Article IX Section 5 below.

Section 4. Duties and Functions. The duties and functions of the Board of Directors shall be as follows:

- (a) the Board of Directors shall exercise overall control over the affairs and operations of the ABFA;
- (b) the Board of Directors shall be charged with establishing standards for the profession of forensic anthropology, in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws. These standards shall apply to all persons applying for certification;
- (c) the Board of Directors shall hold at least one (1) meeting annually and may hold additional meetings on reasonable notice upon the call of the President of the Board or upon the written request of a majority of the Directors;
- (d) the Board of Directors may, from time to time, designate qualified persons (who need not be Directors) or organizations to act on behalf of the ABFA in performing such duties and functions as the Board of Directors may require. Such persons and organizations may be compensated for their services and reimbursed for the actual and necessary expenses incurred in the discharge of such duties and functions, and shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors.

**ARTICLE VII**  
**Executive Committee**

**Section 1. Composition.** An Executive Committee of the Board of Directors shall be elected by the Board of Directors and shall consist of the following officers: the President, who shall serve as chairperson, the Vice President, the Secretary, and the Treasurer. A quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of a majority of its Officers, and its formal actions shall require a majority vote unless otherwise provided herein.

**Section 2. Authority.** The Executive Committee shall have full authority and power to act for and on behalf of the Board of Directors between meetings of said Board, except as herein otherwise provided. Actions taken by the Executive Committee on behalf of the Board of Directors shall be reported to the Board of Directors as soon as practical.

**ARTICLE VIII**  
**Committees**

**Section 1. General.** The Board of Directors, by majority vote, may designate, establish, and determine the scope of authority, functions and duties of standing and special committees as it deems necessary.

**Section 2. Composition.** Each standing or special committee shall consist of two (2) or more persons, as designated by the Board of Directors. The chairperson of each committee shall be a member of the Board of Directors; other members of a committee may be members of the Board of Directors or other qualified persons. The President shall be an *ex-officio* member of all committees.

**Section 3. Appointment and Authority.** The chairperson and other members of each standing or special committee, unless otherwise provided herein, shall be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors. The President may appoint interim *ad hoc* committees pending approval of the Board of Directors. Every committee may, unless otherwise provided herein, exercise the authority of the Board of Directors in the manner and to the extent provided for in the resolution establishing the committee. Recommendations made by appointed committees shall not be binding upon the Board of Directors.

**Section 4. Term of Office.** Unless otherwise provided herein or in the resolution of the Board of Directors establishing a standing or special committee, the chairperson and other members of every standing or special committee shall serve one (1) year terms and be eligible for reappointment. At the end of the term, individual committee members will cease participation unless asked by the President to remain on a specific committee for the sake of continuity or expertise.

**ARTICLE IX**  
**Elections and Terms of Office**

**Section 1. Election of Officers.** The election of Executive Committee Officers shall be by ballot (electronic or written) or voice vote of the Board of Directors, and a majority of votes cast shall be required to elect an Officer.

**Section 2. Terms of Office of Executive Committee Members.** The Officers shall take office on July 1 following their election, and each shall hold office for one (1) year, or until his or her successor has been duly elected and qualified.

Section 3. Vacancies Among Officers. The current Vice President shall fill any vacancy in the office of President that occurs mid-term. Vacancies in other Officer positions shall be filled by election within the Board of Directors. Such election shall be conducted by ballot (electronic or written) or voice vote.

Section 4. Election of Directors. Directors shall be nominated and elected by the active Members of the ABFA. The election of Directors shall be by ballot (electronic or written) occurring prior to July 1 of each year. A plurality of votes cast shall be required to elect a Director. When two (2) or more vacancies for Directors are being filled, the nominees with the most votes shall be elected.

Section 5. Term of Office of Directors. The terms of all Directors shall be three (3) years, unless otherwise specified herein. A nominated Director may serve not more than two (2) consecutive full terms without an intervening period of one (1) year, unless otherwise specified herein. Each Director's term of office shall commence on July 1 following election and shall end on June 30 of his or her final year in that office, or when his or her successor has been duly elected and qualified.

Section 6. Vacancies Among Directors. Should a Director be unable or unwilling to complete his or her elected term, the President shall be empowered to appoint a temporary Director from among the active Members of the ABFA for the remainder of the current term, for a period not to exceed one (1) year. At the next scheduled election cycle, the position shall be filled via a regular election. A duly-elected replacement Director shall serve for a term of three (3) years as described in Article IX Section 5 above.

## ARTICLE X Indemnification and Surety

Section 1. Indemnification. The Corporation shall indemnify any person made a party to any action, suit or proceeding, by reason of the fact that he/she, his/her testator or intestate, is or was a Director, Officer or employee of the Corporation, or of any corporation which he/she served as such at the request of the Corporation, against the reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees actually and necessarily incurred by him or her in connection with the defense of such action, suit or proceeding, or in connection with any appeal therein, except in relation to matters as to which it shall be adjudged in such action, suit or proceeding that such Officer, Director or employee is liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of his or her duties. The Corporation may also reimburse to any such Director, Officer, or employee the reasonable costs of settlement of any such action, suit or proceeding, if it shall be found by a majority of a committee composed of the Directors not involved in the matter in controversy (whether or not a quorum) that it was in the interests of the Corporation that such settlement be made and that such Director, Officer, or employee was not guilty of negligence or misconduct. Such rights of indemnification and reimbursement shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which such Director, Officer or employee may be entitled apart from the provisions of this section.

Section 2. Surety. The Board of Directors shall, in their discretion, procure or cause to be procured, at the ABFA's expense, appropriate liability insurance coverage for the ABFA's Officers, Directors, agents and employees.

Section 3. Fidelity Bonds. The Board of Directors may require the Treasurer of the Board to furnish, at the expense of the ABFA, an appropriate fidelity bond approved by the Board of Directors. At the end of the term of the Treasurer of the ABFA an independent audit prepared by a CPA shall be provided to the Board, at the expense of the ABFA.



**ARTICLE XI**  
**Meetings and Operations**

**Section 1. Annual Meeting.** The annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held at the call of the President, at a location designated by the President within or without the District of Columbia. Notice of the annual meeting shall be provided to each Director at least thirty (30) days before the meeting date. An annual meeting may be conducted by mail or email or by conference upon the written consent of two-thirds (2/3) of the Directors in office.

**Section 2. Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the President, or upon the written request of a majority of the Directors in office, on a date and at a time and location to be designated by the President, within or without the District of Columbia. Notice of a special meeting shall be given to each Director at least fifteen (15) days before the meeting date, with information regarding the subject(s) to be considered.

**Section 3. Quorum.** A quorum for all purposes herein, unless otherwise provided, shall consist of a majority of the Directors. In the event less than this number is present at a meeting, the President may adjourn the meeting not longer than thirty (30) days under the same call for a meeting. No Director shall be entitled to vote through use of a proxy.

**Section 4. Conduct of Board Business.**

- (a) ABFA business including that of an annual meeting may be conducted by mail, or email, by conference, or by a committee comprised of not less than two (2) persons when authorized by a majority of the Directors in office.
- (b) When such business conducted by mail or email calls for a vote of the Board of Directors, a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of those responding shall be required to carry a motion.
- (c) ABFA business carried on by conference or by standing or special committees shall be conducted in such manner as the Board of Directors may direct.

**Section 5. Territory.** The operations of the ABFA are to be conducted in the United States of America and its territories and possessions, and in such other place(s) as the Board of Directors may, from time to time, authorize and direct.

**ARTICLE XII**  
**Finances**

**Section 1. Fiscal Year.** The fiscal year of the ABFA shall be from July 1 through June 30, inclusive.

**Section 2. Income.** The income of the ABFA shall be derived from application fees and other fees and charges, from gifts, grants and contributions, and from such other sources and activities as may be approved by the Board of Directors. All monies accruing to the Board shall be collected by such person(s) as the Board of Directors may designate.

**Section 3. Compensation and Reimbursements.** No member of the Board of Directors shall be paid any salary or fee for his or her services as a Director or an Officer. Subject to the availability of funds, a Director or an Officer may be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred by him or her in attending meetings of the Board of Directors or in performing other duties or functions on behalf of the ABFA. The Board of Directors shall determine the compensation and reimbursements to be paid to parties, other than Officers and Directors of the Board of Directors, for services performed or for activities carried out on behalf of the ABFA.

**ARTICLE XIII**  
**Certification**

**Section 1. Standards.** The Board of Directors shall establish, maintain, and revise as necessary, standards and qualifications for the granting, issuing, and renewing of certificates and/or other forms of recognition in cognizance of special qualifications in forensic anthropology.

**Section 2. Professional.** Applicants must possess an earned doctoral degree in anthropology with an emphasis in physical/biological anthropology at the time of application. Doctoral degrees with a different emphasis must be approved by the Board of Directors.

**Section 3. Evaluation of Applicants.** The Board of Directors shall evaluate the fitness, competence, and qualifications of persons seeking certification by the ABFA. This function may be carried out, in part, by an Application Committee whose membership shall include at least two (2) Directors. Approval for an applicant to sit for the ABFA examination requires a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Further details on the examination process are contained within the current ABFA guidelines for certification procedure.

**Section 4. Certificates.** The Board of Directors shall have authority to issue or cause to be issued Certificates of Qualification in Forensic Anthropology to persons who have met the standards of the ABFA and have fully complied with all applicable requirements. Certificates of Qualification shall be issued in such form and at a date as approved by the Board of Directors. A person holding a valid, un-revoked Certificate of Qualification issued by the ABFA shall be entitled to use the designation “Diplomate of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology”, and shall be known as “certified” by the ABFA.

**Section 5. Fees.** The Board of Directors shall establish the fees and other charges incident to application for and granting, issuing, and renewing of Certificates of Qualification and/or other forms of recognition.

**Section 6. Denial and Revocation of Certificates.** The right to deny certification and to suspend or revoke Certificates of Qualification shall reside with the Board of Directors. Certificates issued by the ABFA are subject to revocation only for one or more of the following reasons:

- (a) a misstatement or misrepresentation, or concealment or omission, of a material fact or facts in an application or any other communication to the ABFA or its representative(s);
- (b) conviction of an applicant for certification or holder of a certificate of the ABFA by a court of competent jurisdiction of a felony or of any crime involving, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, moral turpitude;
- (c) issuance of a certificate contrary to or in violation of any of the laws, standards, rules, or regulations governing the ABFA and its certification programs at the time of its issuance; or determination that the person certified was not in fact eligible to receive such certificate at the time of its issuance;
- (d) non-payment of annual renewal fees after the second notice by the Treasurer. Reinstatement may be granted in that fiscal year upon payment of the outstanding fees plus a reinstatement charge equal to the current application fee;
- (e) failure to complete recertification updates as required;
- (f) or if the following two conditions apply:
  - a. upon the recommendation of any two active Members of the ABFA, the qualifications of any active Member may be reviewed by the Ethics Committee to determine whether the Certificate of Qualification issued by the

- ABFA should be revoked. The candidate shall have the right to present his or her case to the Ethics Committee;
- b. upon recommendation of the Ethics Committee and approval by 2/3 of the Board of Directors, action to suspend or revoke certification may only be taken after at least thirty (30) days advance notice of the nature of the charges or reasons for such action has been given to the individual concerned and a reasonable opportunity for such person to be heard has been provided by the Board of Directors.

#### ARTICLE XIV Parliamentary Authority

Section 1. Parliamentary Authority. Unless otherwise provided in its Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws, the conduct of meetings of the ABFA shall be governed by rules promulgated by the Board of Directors or, in the absence of such rules, by the rules contained in Sturgis' "Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure", latest edition available. Any question as to priority of business shall be decided by a Parliamentarian designated by the President, or in the absence of a Parliamentarian, by the President.

Section 2. Suspension of Rules. The rules governing the conduct of meetings may be suspended at any meeting by a 2/3 vote of the Directors present, if and as allowed by a standard parliamentary procedure.

#### ARTICLE XV Seal and Insignia

Section 1. The Board shall have a corporate seal and may have other devices and insignia, of such design as the Board of Directors adopt.

ARTICLE XVI  
Amendments

Section 1. Any active Member of the ABFA may propose amendments by submitting a proposal for consideration by the Board of Directors. It is the duty of the Board of Directors to publicize proposed amendments to the active Members of the ABFA as soon as possible after receipt.

Section 2. These Bylaws may be amended, altered, or repealed, in whole or in part, in the following ways:

- (a) upon two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the active Members of the ABFA present at a meeting of the ABFA at which a quorum is present, provided that a copy of the proposed change(s) has been submitted to all active ABFA Members at least thirty (30) days prior to such meeting at which final action is to be taken;
- (b) upon two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote by electronic communication of the active members of the ABFA who respond within thirty (30) days after a copy of the proposed change(s) has been submitted to all active Members of the ABFA.

ARTICLE XVII  
Effective Date of Bylaws

Section 1. These Bylaws shall become effective following approval by the active Members as specified in Article XVI Section 2 above.

**American Board of Forensic Anthropology, Inc.**  
**CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT**

Proposed February 16, 1999

Approved by the Board February 20, 2001

Revisions in 2008, 2012, 2016

**SECTION I - THE CODE:** As a means to promote the highest quality of professional and personal conduct of its members, the following constitutes the Code of Ethics and Conduct, which is endorsed and adhered to by all Diplomates of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology (ABFA).

Diplomates of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology shall:

- a) refrain from exercising professional or personal conduct adverse to the best interests and purposes of the ABFA;
- b) refrain from providing any material misrepresentation of education, training, experience, or area of expertise. Misrepresentation of one or more criteria for certification shall constitute a violation of this section of the code;
- c) refrain from providing any material misrepresentation of data upon which an expert opinion or conclusion is based. Diplomates shall render opinions and conclusions strictly in accordance with the evidence in the case (hypothetical or real) and only to the extent justified by the evidence;
- d) not make statements in his/her written reports, public addresses, or testimony that are not technically correct and scientifically based;
- e) act at all times in a completely impartial manner by employing scientific methodology to reach logical, unbiased conclusions and by reporting all findings in a clear, concise manner;
- f) set a reasonable fee for services if it is appropriate to do so; however, no services shall be rendered on a contingency fee basis;
- g) treat all information from an agency or client with the confidentiality required;
- h) refrain from issuing public statements that appear to represent the position of the ABFA without specific authority first obtained from the Board of Directors.

**SECTION II - GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINE:** Any Diplomat whose professional conduct becomes adverse to the best interests and purposes of the ABFA shall be liable to censure, suspension, or expulsion with revocation and recall of certification granted in Article XIII, Section 4 of the Bylaws. The Diplomat shall be issued a written reprimand, suspended, or decertified by action of the ABFA Board of Directors acting on the findings and recommendations of the Ethics Committee, following the appeal period or any other actions required. Investigative action may be initiated due to alleged violations of professional or personal malfeasance including, but not limited to, any of the following provisions:

- a) an intentional misstatement or misrepresentation or concealment or omission of a material fact or facts in an application or any other communication to the Board or its representative(s);
- b) conviction of a holder of a certificate by this Board by a court of competent jurisdiction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude;
- c) issuance of a certificate contrary to or in violation of any of the laws, standard rules, or regulations governing the Board and its certification programs at the time of its issuance; or determination that the person certified was not in fact eligible to receive such certificate at the time of its issuance;

- d) violations of the Code of Ethics and Conduct (see above) of the ABFA by an applicant or holder of a certificate of this Board; and/or
- e) official censure or suspension by another body, including a university or other place of employment.
- f) Additionally, the qualifications of any Diplomate may be reviewed by the Ethics Committee to determine whether the Certificate of Qualification issued by the Board should be revoked. The candidate shall have the right to present his or her case to the Ethics Committee, but the final decision rests with the Ethics Committee.

**SECTION III - INVESTIGATIVE BODY:** There shall be constituted a standing Ethics Committee, the primary composition and function of which will be:

- a) the standing Ethics Committee shall serve as the investigative body to which the chairperson of the Ethics Committee shall refer all cases for consideration;
- b) the members of the Ethics Committee shall be appointed by the President of the Board with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors. Each member, with the exception of the non-voting attorney member, if present, will serve a one-year term. The Ethics Committee shall elect a chairperson from its membership annually;
- c) the President of the ABFA may chair the Ethics Committee or appoint a designee in the absence of the Ethics Committee chairperson, if the chairperson is under investigation, has a conflict of interest in that particular case, or for other valid reasons, is unable to participate;
- d) the Ethics Committee can order investigations and serve as a hearing agency concerning past or present conduct of individual members of the ABFA which may constitute a violation of the provisions of the Code of Ethics and Conduct.

**SECTION IV - INVESTIGATION INITIATING ACTION:** The following are the principal forms by which the Ethics Committee may initiate investigative proceedings:

- a) the Ethics Committee may institute an inquiry based on any evidence brought to its attention which indicates the need for further query or positive action under the provisions of the Bylaws. Appropriate to this form of action, ABFA officers, upon receipt of a complaint concerning the professional or personal conduct of a Diplomate, may refer said complaint to the Ethics Committee in writing, accompanied by a recommendation, if any, concerning need for further investigation. Such recommendations, however, shall not be binding on the Ethics Committee.

**SECTION V - JUDICIARY PROCESS**

- a) Written allegations against a Diplomate, submitted under the guidelines in Section IV, if delivered to the ABFA Secretary, shall immediately be transmitted to the chairperson of the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee may contact any individual or entity (whether an ABFA Diplomate or not) in its investigations.
- b) The Ethics Committee shall assemble written data from the Complainant(s) which will permit the Ethics Committee to arrive at a preliminary determination as to whether the complaint is well founded and requires further investigation. The Complainant(s) can choose to remain anonymous until the Ethics Committee determines that there is a need for further investigation and/or hearing. If further investigation is deemed necessary, the Ethics Committee will give notice of the filing of a complaint, the nature of the complaint and provide the identity of the Complainant to the Respondent within thirty (30) days of receipt of the original complaint. If the

Ethics Committee finds that the complaint is unfounded, they may dismiss the complaint and notify the Complainant(s) in writing.

- c) If the Ethics Committee finds enough evidence during the preliminary investigation to suggest that a complaint may be substantiated, a hearing will be convened. The Ethics Committee shall give both the Respondent and the Complainant(s) a reasonable opportunity to be heard and address each other.
  - (1) Notice shall be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to both the Respondent and Complainant(s) for the purpose of setting up a formal hearing.
  - (2) The Respondent shall receive a copy of the written complaint. He/she is entitled to see the document in its entire form. The Respondent will be given thirty (30) days from receipt of the hearing request to advise the Ethics Committee of his/her intention to provide a written or oral defense against the charges.
  - (3) After receipt of the return notice (by certified mail, return receipt requested) a formal hearing date will be mutually agreed to by both parties and the Ethics Committee. This date will be at least ninety (90) days from said receipt of official notice in order to give both parties adequate time to prepare for the hearing. If agreeable to both parties, the hearing shall be held at or about the time of the annual meeting of the ABFA in order to keep costs to a minimum. If one or both parties request a hearing date at a time other than the annual meeting, the costs of said hearing shall be the responsibility of the party/parties requesting the hearing and not the ABFA.
  - (4) At this hearing no legal counsel for either the Respondent or Complainant may be present. The attorney member of the ABFA, as a non-voting member of the Ethics Committee, will be present for the purpose of assuring that propriety, protocol, and adherence to proper procedures is maintained during the hearing. The attorney member of the ABFA shall act in an advisory position to the committee only and shall not be involved in the presentation of the case for either party. The ABFA will assume the cost of the attorney's travel, lodging, and a per diem amount equivalent to that set by the General Services Administration (GSA).
  - (5) The Ethics Committee shall make a report, which will include a recommendation to the ABFA Board of Directors at the conclusion of the hearing(s). Recommendations are to be limited to the following forms of discipline:
    - (a) *Written Reprimand*: The reprimand is to help a Diplomat correct improper actions that would have serious consequences if allowed to continue.
    - (b) *Suspension*: Suspension is the removal of a Diplomat's association with the Board and his/her certification status for one year from the date of the notification.
    - (c) *Decertification*: This is used to remove a Diplomat's certification. This action is appropriate in situations where it is not reasonable to expect that the Diplomat will be able to correct the problem (s) or when a Diplomat would severely damage the reputation of the ABFA if he/she were associated with the ABFA.
- d) Upon a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the members of the Board of Directors present and voting, the Respondent may be issued a written reprimand, suspended, or decertified. No Board of Director member or member of the Ethics Committee who has a conflict of interest shall sit in deliberation on any manner concerning ethics. The Respondent will be notified within ten (10) days of the vote by the ABFA BOD.
- e) The Respondent has the right to appeal the action of the Board of Directors to the Diplomates of the ABFA. In effecting an appeal, the appellant must file a brief typewritten notice of the appeal, together with any typewritten statement he/she may wish to submit in his/her behalf, with the

ABFA Secretary not more than thirty (30) days after receiving notice of the action of the Board. Punitive actions of the Board against the Respondent shall not commence until after thirty (30) days from the date of notification of the accused to allow time for the appeal. The Secretary shall immediately advise each member of the Board of Directors of the appeal and shall forward to each a copy of the supporting papers submitted by the appellant. If no appeal is received by the Secretary within thirty (30) days, the actions of the Board shall be implemented and may no longer be appealed.

- f) If an appeal is received within thirty (30) days, the Executive Committee shall prepare a written statement of the reasons for the Board of Directors' actions and file the same with the ABFA Secretary not more than thirty (30) days from receipt of the appeal.
- g) Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the statement from the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors shall choose three (3) Diplomates-at-Large (not on the Board of Directors), and the appellant shall choose four (4) Diplomates-at-Large (not on the Board of Directors) to hear the appeal.
- h) The Secretary of the Board shall send the statements from the appellant and the Executive Committee to each of the members of this Appeal Committee within fourteen (14) days after the Board is convened.
- i) The members of this Appeal Committee shall arrange a closed meeting either in person or by conference call(s). The meeting(s) shall be strictly confidential. Neither the Respondent nor the Complainant(s) or any member of the Board of Directors shall be part of the meeting. The non-voting attorney member of the ABFA shall be part of the meeting(s) to assure propriety, protocol, and adherence to procedures. The attorney shall not represent either party involved in the hearing. The ABFA will assume the costs associated with the involvement of the non-voting attorney member of the ABFA.
- j) Decisions of the Diplomates in the closed hearing will be based upon the written information provided by the appellant and the Ethics Committee convened to oversee the appeal. A written vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the Appeal Committee present and voting at the closed meeting shall be required to overrule the action of the Board of Directors in regard to issuing a written reprimand, suspension, or decertification of a Diplomate.
- k) The Board will not refund any annual dues for the current year, in whole or in part. A Diplomate who has been suspended but reinstated after a successful appeal can resume active status without reapplying for certification. He/she must, however, express an interest to resume active status in writing to the President of the Board.

**SECTION VI: REQUEST FOR REINSTATEMENT:** A Diplomate who has been decertified may reapply for certification after 5 years from the date of decertification. The individual is subject to the same application requirements as any other applicant, including taking the certifying examination. The individual must provide a detailed description of the circumstances of decertification along with any applicable remedies that have been undertaken by the individual since the decertification took effect.

#### **SECTION VII - CONFIDENTIALITY, RULES, AND PROCEDURES**

- (a) Any member of the Ethics Committee, Board of Directors, or Appeals Committee divulging information on matters previously considered or being considered could be in violation of the Code of Ethics and Conduct and is subject to charges of same being filed. This does not apply to written statements made and worded by the Board of Directors concerning ethical matters or



about the case(s) being considered which may be distributed to the Appeals Committee by said person after Executive Committee approval.

- (b) The Ethics Committee shall formulate internal Rules and Procedures, and from time to time propose changes to such Rules and Procedures, designed to facilitate the expeditious, fair, discreet, and impartial handling of all complaints or matters brought before the Ethics Committee. The Rules and Procedures, and any subsequent deletions, additions, or amendments thereto, shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.

**American Board of Forensic Anthropology  
Diplomate Manual  
Section III Policies and Procedures Revised 18 February 2020**

**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**Elected Officers:**

Officers shall take office on July 1 following their election and each shall hold office for one (1) year or until his or her successor has been duly elected and qualified. Vacancies among officers (with the exception of the office of President who shall be succeeded by the sitting Vice President) shall be filled through election, specifically by majority vote, from among the membership of the Board of Directors. Such election may be conducted by mail or email ballot.

**The President** (1 year term) is nominated and elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors from its members.

The President shall:

- 1) Preside over meetings of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and Diplomates.
- 2) Develop meeting agendas in consultation with the other members of the Executive Committee.
- 3) Prepare an annual report for the Board of Directors Meeting.
- 4) Serve as an *ex officio* member of all committees.
- 5) Maintain an up-to-date list of all committee memberships.
- 6) Assist Executive Committee members in making decisions when/if issues arise throughout the year.
- 7) Appoint officers and chairpersons of standing and special committees as directed by the Bylaws.
- 8) Notify chairpersons of their committee membership and charges within one week after the annual meeting.
- 9) Maintain copies of critical documents and/or correspondence in a secure location.
- 10) Transfer all pertinent ABFA Presidential material to the incoming President within thirty (30) days of the new President assuming office.
- 11) Schedule rooms for the annual Board of Directors meeting, examination and annual Diplomates' meeting in coordination with the appropriate American Academy of Forensic Sciences staff member.
- 12) Review and approve final minutes from the annual meeting.
- 13) Communicate a synopsis of decisions made at the semi-annual and annual Board of Directors' meeting at the annual Diplomates' meeting immediately following the Board of Directors' meeting.
- 14) Approve and disseminate minutes from the Diplomates' meeting within 14 days of receipt from the Secretary.
- 15) Advise Diplomates of new policies and procedures.
- 16) Present Certificates of Qualification to and welcome new Diplomates at the annual Diplomates' meeting.

- 17) Collect and maintain signed Endorsement of Professional and Ethical Standards statements from Diplomates.
- 18) Oversee the maintenance of the ABFA website.
- 19) Maintain contact information for the ABFA attorney.
- 20) Maintain contact information for the ABFA insurance company.
- 21) Maintain liaison with the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board and ensure annual and 5-year reports are submitted on a timely basis.
- 22) Serve as a point of contact for the appeals process (see ABFA Examination Appeal Process).
- 23) Represent the ABFA Diplomates and Board of Directors to outside agencies as required and appropriate.

The **Vice President** (1 year term) is nominated and elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors from its members. The Vice President shall fill any vacancy in the office of President if such occurs during his/her term in office.

The Vice President shall:

- 1) Attend all meetings of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and Diplomates-at-Large.
- 2) Prepare an annual report for the Board of Directors Meeting.
- 3) Be familiar with the duties of President and be willing to assume the President's position if necessary.
- 4) Preside over some Examination Committees (Exam Development and Grading Committees) and be ultimately responsible for the development, planning, execution, proctoring, and grading of the certification examination.
- 5) Notify examinees of the due date and amount of the examination fee.
- 6) Notify examinees of the time and location of the examination prior to the examination.
- 7) Notify all examinees of the results of the examination by March 31 following the examination.
- 8) Destroy all completed examinations consistent with the examination policies.
- 9) Maintain copies of all critical documents and/or correspondence in a secure location.
- 10) Package and ship and/or electronically transfer all ABFA Vice Presidential material and equipment to the incoming Vice President within thirty (30) days of the new Vice President assuming office.
- 11) Review and approve final minutes from the annual meetings.

The **Secretary** (1 year term) is nominated and elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors from its members.

The Secretary shall:

- 1) Attend all meetings of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and Diplomates-at-Large.
- 2) Produce the minutes of the annual meeting of the Board of Directors within sixty (60) days and send to the Board of Directors for approval.
- 3) Produce the minutes of the annual meeting of the Diplomates-at-Large within thirty (30) days.
- 4) Notify the AAFS staff of changes in the ABFA officers within 30 days after the annual business meeting.
- 5) Maintain the corporate seal/embosser.
- 6) Maintain copies of all critical documents and/or correspondence in a secure location.
- 7) Package and ship all ABFA Secretary material and equipment to the incoming Secretary within thirty (30) days of the new Secretary assuming office.

- 8) Maintain permanent archives of original application forms.
- 9) Maintain a list of past officers.
- 10) Notify the Webmaster of necessary changes to the ABFA web site.
- 11) Notify the Chairperson of the Ethics Committee of the AAFS of censure, suspension, or expulsion of a Diplomat by the ABFA due to ethics violations (in accordance with Section 6, Paragraph c of the ABFA Code of Ethics and Conduct).
- 12) Create Certificates of Qualification and ensure that each is signed by all members of the Executive Committee prior to presentation to new Diplomates at the annual Diplomates' meeting.

The **Treasurer** (1 year term) is nominated and elected by majority vote of the Board of Directors from its members.

The Treasurer shall:

- 1) Attend all meetings of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and Diplomates-at-Large.
- 2) Prepare a report for the prior fiscal year, a mid-year report for the current fiscal year, and a report of current financial status for the annual Board of Directors meeting.
- 3) Maintain the financial records of the ABFA using accepted accounting practices.
- 4) Retain financial documents using an accepted accounting retention schedule.
- 5) Oversee ABFA budgets and notify the Executive Committee when expenditures will exceed assets.
- 6) Estimate proposed budget changes as needed and present budget proposals to the Board of Directors for consideration.
- 7) Send to all active Diplomates the first notice of the January 1 dues deadline by December 1 of the year prior to the deadline.
  - a) If needed, send a second notice of the January 1 deadline by February 1.
  - b) If the January deadline is still not met, send a **delinquent** dues notice by March 1 through certified mail (return receipt requested). This third notice shall state that action to revoke certification has been initiated and will automatically occur if dues are not received by April 1. This third statement shall also include the following sentence: "The Treasurer must receive written notification through certified mail by March 15 of circumstances beyond your control that prevent your payment of outstanding dues by the extended deadline of April 1. The Board of Directors will review these circumstances and, at their discretion, may extend the deadline."
- 8) Ensure application and examination fees are collected in a timely fashion and notify the Vice President of the status of all application and exam fees no later than seven (7) days after the due date(s).
- 9) Receive insurance premium statement and, in consultation with the President, be responsible for annual payment of insurance premiums.
- 10) Collect annual dues payments and notify the Recertification Committee of the dues status of Diplomates no later than March 1.
- 11) Reimburse expenses for members of the Board of Directors in accordance with ABFA policies.
- 12) Pay appropriate expenses incurred for ABFA business.
- 13) Notify insurance company of Treasurer's contact information when new officer takes office.
- 14) Notify CT Corporation of Treasurer's contact information when new officer takes office.
- 15) On even-numbered years, pay biennial report fee to the District of Columbia.

- 16) Maintain copies of critical documents and/or correspondence in a secure location.
- 17) Package and ship all ABFA Treasurer materials, equipment, and bank assets to the incoming Treasurer within thirty (30) days of the new Treasurer assuming office.
- 18) Make arrangements for a complete outside audit of the ABFA financial records every three years or at the time a new Treasurer is elected.

**Board of Directors:** Each term on the Board of Directors will last 3 years. Diplomates may only serve on the Board of Directors for two consecutive terms. After a break in service of at least one year, Diplomates are again eligible for election to the Board of Directors. Members of the Board of Directors are nominated by the Diplomates-at-Large and elected by majority vote of the Diplomates-at-Large (see Nomination Committee).

*Any Officer or Director shall be subject to removal from office or from the Board of Directors for failure to complete his/her duties in a timely manner by majority vote of the members of the Board of Directors.*

**Directors-at-Large shall:**

- 1) Be familiar with the Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, Code of Ethics and Conduct, and this manual.
- 2) Read and respond to correspondence from the Board of Directors in a timely manner.
- 3) Serve on committees as directed by the President.

**Committees:** Each committee shall consist of two (2) or more persons. The chairperson of each committee shall be a member of the Board of Directors, while other members of a committee may be members of the Board of Directors, Diplomates-at-Large, or other qualified persons. The President is an *ex officio* member of all committees. Unless otherwise provided herein, the President of the Board, with the advice of the Board of Directors, shall appoint the chairperson and other members of each Standing or Special Committee.

The chairperson and other members of every Standing or Special Committee shall serve one (1) year terms and, unless otherwise provided within the Bylaws or resolved by the Board of Directors, are eligible for reappointment. At the end of the term, committee participation will cease unless asked by the President to remain on a specific committee for the sake of continuity or expertise.

**Standing Committees:**

- 1) **Executive Committee:** This committee shall consist of the sitting President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The President is the Chairperson of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall have full authority and power to act for and on behalf of the Board of Directors between meetings of said Board, except as provided in the Bylaws. Actions taken by the Executive Committee on behalf of the Board of Directors shall be reported to the Board of Directors as soon as practicable.
- 2) **Ethics Committee:** This committee shall consist of at least two (2) members of the Board of Directors and at least one (1) member from the Diplomates-at-Large. The Ethics Committee will investigate allegations against Diplomates for violations of Rules of Ethics and Conduct and will

recommend action to the Board of Directors consistent with the procedures, standards, rules, and regulations established by the Board.

- 3) **Examination Committees:** *The Examination Committees shall consist of the Examination Development Committee, Examination Validation Committee, and the Examination Grading Committee. The Examination Committees are charged with administering the ABFA certification examination, including creating, validating, proctoring, and grading. Subcommittees associated with the certification examination include:*
- a) *Examination Development Committee:* The Examination Development Committee shall consist of a Chair (the ABFA Vice President) and at least three other members chosen from the Board of Directors and the ABFA Diplomates-at-Large. The committee shall be established during the annual Board of Directors meeting and committee members shall serve a minimum of one year. The purpose of this committee is to develop and execute the certification examination. This committee is responsible for soliciting and/or creating new multiple choice written examination questions and practical examination questions, maintaining databases of both multiple choice written exam, and practical exam questions, and updating/curating a reading list of the scholarly sources which serve as the basis for the questions of the written and practical exams. The Committee, under the direction of the chair, may contact the Diplomates-at-Large or authors from pertinent research articles to request both written/practical questions as well as materials for the practical exam. Diplomates-at-large and non-Diplomate authors must submit a confidentiality agreement prior to submitting questions.
- (1) The Chair of the Examination Development Committee is responsible for submitting written questions to the Examination Validation Committee and updating the database appropriately with the questions that have been validated or rejected by the Examination Validation Committee.
  - (2) The Chair of the Examination Development Committee shall store each validated question in a master test bank, and each question shall be marked with its validation date. Each validated question shall be revalidated at least every 5 years for accuracy and relevance.
  - (3) The Examination Development Committee shall construct the written exam by drawing only from validated questions in the master test bank. The master test bank of validated question should be divided into categories based on question content and the written examination should be drawn from the various categories.
  - (4) The Examination Development Committee will maintain a database to include the number of missed answers for each question so that the Validation Committee can use these data to assess the reliability and validity of the questions during cyclical revalidation.
  - (5) The Examination Development Committee also writes the practical exam and prepares the materials for validation at the exam site prior to administration of the exam. The examination Development Committee is responsible for digitally documenting the specimen at each station of the practical examination once validation has been completed.
  - (6) The Chair of this committee (i.e., the ABFA Vice President) will communicate directly with examinees regarding information pertinent to the examination (including but not limited to exam location, times, confidentiality agreements and examination results).
- b) **Examination Validation Committee:** The Examination Validation Committee consists of a Chair (appointed by the ABFA Vice President) and at least three other members chosen from the Board of Directors and the ABFA Diplomates-at-Large. The committee shall be established during the annual Board of Directors meeting and committee members shall serve a minimum

of one year. The purpose of the Examination Validation Committee is to review the multiple choice written examination questions and the questions and components of the practical examination of the ABFA certification exam, to ensure that the questions are clear, concise, and appropriate (in terms of both content and structure), as well as assist with proctoring the written and practical examinations.

- (1) For both the written and practical portions of the certification exam, all multiple choice questions obtained by the Vice President and the Examination-Development Committee shall be reviewed by the Examination Validation Committee prior to their first intended use in an exam. Each Examination Validation Committee member shall independently assess whether a question and provided answers are acceptable as is, needs minor or major editing for clarity or accuracy, or should be discarded due to irredeemable flaws. Additionally, questions and associated answers may be rejected due to their trivial nature in regards to information considered important knowledge in the practice of forensic anthropology or it is determined that they are outside the typical scope of forensic anthropology.
  - (2) The Examination Validation Committee Chair shall collate the comments provided by the committee members and identify questions that are suitable for the exam (based on both content and structure), providing direction on any that require revision. A final report shall be submitted to the Vice President, who is bound by the decisions of the Examination Validation Committee.
  - (3) For the practical component of the exam, each Examination Validation Committee member shall complete independently, the practical exam at least one day prior to its implementation, preferably in the exam room using the instruments that will be provided to the examinees. Afterwards, the committee shall compare each answer to the answer key proposed by the Examination Development Committee, and the appropriateness of the test materials and the proposed answers shall be assessed. Then, in consultation with the Examination Development Committee Chair (i.e., the Vice President), the Examination Validation Committee provides guidance on the grading rubric that the Grading Committee will use in grading the practical exam and modifies the answer key or practical stations as it deems necessary. A majority vote by the Examination Validation Committee members present shall constitute sufficient authority to remove any item or station from the exam in its entirety, or reword/replace practical examination materials as needed.
  - (4) Members of this committee shall assist the Examination Development Committee Members with proctoring the examination as needed.
  - (5) Members of the Examination Validation Committee shall not serve on the Grading Committee. Members of the Examination Validation Committee shall not serve on the Exam Appeal Committee related to the exam; however, they can be consulted whenever the Exam Appeal Committee finds it necessary to assess the validity, appropriateness, or veracity of any written or practical exam questions.
- c) **Examination Grading Committee:** The Examination Grading Committee is composed of members of the Board of Director and Diplomates-at-Large. The size of the committee depends on the number of examinees, and the members are appointed by the Examination Development Committee. The role of the committee is primarily to grade the practical exams, although assisting with grading the multiple choice written exam may be required.
- (1) The Examination Grading Committee members cannot be members of any of the other exam-related committees.
  - (2) The Chair of the Examination Development Committee (i.e., the Vice President) is

present during the grading of the practical to answer questions but does not grade exams. However, the Chair is responsible for tallying grades and fix any grading errors as necessary.

- (3) Assigning full and partial credit for practical exam answers is under the purview of the Grading Committee with consideration of the guidance provided by the Examination Development Committee and the Examination Validation Committee.
- 4) **Recertification Committee:** This committee shall consist of at least two (2) individuals in addition to the Treasurer, appointed from the Board of Directors by the President. The Recertification Committee shall oversee recertification of Diplomates consistent with procedures, standards, rules, and regulations established by the Board of Directors. The Chairperson of the Recertification Committee is responsible for providing timely reports to the Executive Committee during the course of the year. The Chairperson of the Recertification Committee also presents an annual report of committee activities and actions to the Board of Directors at the annual Diplomates meeting of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology. See specific information concerning recertification under “Recertification Procedure” below.
- 5) **Nomination Committee:** This committee shall consist of at least two (2) individuals appointed from the Board of Directors by the President. The Nomination Committee shall oversee the election of Diplomates to the Board of Directors consistent with procedures, standards, rules and regulations established by the Board of Directors. The Chairperson of the Nomination Committee will call for nominations from the Diplomates-at-Large starting March 1 of each year a vacancy exists on the Board of Directors. The Chairperson of the Nomination Committee will close nominations on March 30 and conduct voting via an anonymous online survey between April 1 and April 15 of the election year. Following certification of the voting results, the Chair will notify the new member(s) of the Board of Directors via email within a week after voting closes.
- 6) **Application Committee:** This committee shall consist of at least two (2) individuals appointed from the Board of Directors by the President. The Application Committee shall oversee the exam application process consistent with procedures, standards, rules and regulations established by the Board of Directors. The responsibility of the Chairperson of the Application Committee is to:
  - (a) Send all necessary application materials to prospective applicants upon request and answer questions regarding the application process.
  - (b) Receive and review application materials from applicants and ensure that the hard copy of the application is properly notarized.



- (c) In concert with the Treasurer, ensure that application fees have been received by the application deadline. Applications with unpaid fees will not be considered.
  - (d) Notify applicants approximately one week prior to April 1 as to the status of the application (including the status of letters of recommendation received), provided the Application Chairperson is aware of the forthcoming application. Send pending applications to members of the Board of Directors prior to May 1.
  - (e) Inform each applicant in writing of the Board's decisions concerning his/her application prior to October 1 and provide written feedback supporting the decision.
- 7) **FSAB Compliance Committee:** The Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (FSAB) Compliance Committee is responsible for completing and submitting the annual ABFA report and all documents related to examination appeals. The Committee is also responsible for contacting the FSAB for guidance on ethical issues, requests for information, and accreditation standards. The President shall serve as the Chairperson of the FSAB Compliance Committee and will appoint at least two (2) additional directors to serve on the committee.
- 8) **Exam Appeal Committee:** The Exam Appeal Committee will address any appeals filed about the certification exam. The Exam Appeal Committee shall consist of at least three (3) individuals. The President will appoint the Chairperson of the Exam Appeal Committee who shall be a current ABFA Board of Directors member and who shall serve as the facilitator of the appeal process. The President will select a minimum of one (1) additional member of the Exam Appeal Committee from the ABFA Board of Directors membership and/or ABFA Diplomates-at-Large. The appellant will select a Diplomate-at-Large who shall serve as a voting member of the Exam Appeal Committee. No person serving on the Exam Appeal Committee shall have been a member of the standing Examination Committees in place during the appellant's examination. Members of the Examination Committees may be called upon by the Exam Appeal Committee to provide information only, but these individuals shall not vote in the appeal process.

**Diplomates-at-Large shall:**

- 1) Be familiar with the Bylaws, the Code of Ethics and Conduct, and this Manual.
- 2) Notify the Secretary of changes in contact information as soon as practicable.
- 3) Annually, submit a signed Endorsement of Professional and Ethical Standards statement by January 1.
- 4) Comply with recertification procedures.
- 5) Read and respond to correspondence from the Board of Directors and/or committee chairs, as applicable.
- 6) Bring concerns about the ABFA to the Board of Directors.
- 7) Pay their dues on or before January 1.

**ABFA Fees:**

- **Application Fee:** \$250.00 non-refundable fee to be submitted with the application.
- **Examination Fee:** \$300.00 non-refundable fee to be submitted by December 1 prior to the examination in February.
- **Annual Dues:** \$175.00 per year due January 1 of each year.
- **Reinstatement Fee:** A penalty reinstatement fee (equal to the application fee of \$250.00) will be levied if the Board of Directors grants reinstatement after non-payment of annual renewal fees, non-compliance with submission of recertification documents, or failure to submit the **Endorsement of Professional and Ethical Standards** statement. This statement can be accessed through the **Policies and Procedures** page of the ABFA website.

## **APPLICATION, EXAMINATION, AND CERTIFICATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Applications are reviewed and approved or rejected by the Board of Directors. Examinations are executed and graded as pass or fail by the Examination Committees.

**Function:** The certification process (including the application and examination portions of the process) encompasses the following functions for the ABFA:

- 1) Review of credentials and required documents of individuals who wish to sit for the examination for a Certificate of Qualification in Forensic Anthropology and approve those who meet the required qualifications. Members of the Board of Directors of the ABFA perform this function.
- 2) Creation, scheduling, administration, and grading of examinations, which must be successfully completed for the examinee to be granted the Certificate of Qualification in Forensic Anthropology awarded by the ABFA. This function is performed by multiple committees and is overseen by the Board of Directors of the ABFA.
- 3) Establishment and maintenance of the application and recertification forms, together with instructions, so that they reflect current information and requirements of the ABFA. All members of the Board of Directors of the ABFA perform this function.
- 4) Establishment of a policy on continuing forensic anthropological education. All members of the Board of Directors of the ABFA perform this function with input from the Diplomates-at-Large.

### **General Provisions Concerning Certification:**

- 1) The Board reserves the right to deny certification.
- 2) Certificates granted and issued by the Board may be suspended or revoked for violations of the Code of Ethics and Conduct as provided in the Bylaws. Additionally, certificates may be revoked for any of the following administrative reasons:
  - (a) Non-payment of annual dues by April 1.
  - (b) Failure to submit a signed Endorsement of Professional and Ethical Standards statement annually.
  - (c) Failure to submit recertification documents in accordance with relevant cycle and timelines.
- 3) Persons holding a valid, un-revoked Certificate of Qualification issued by the Board are entitled to use the following designations: “Diplomate of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology,” “D-ABFA” or “Diplomate, ABFA”.
- 4) A Certificate of Qualification in forensic anthropology is valid for a period of three (3) consecutive years and may be renewed in accordance with the recertification program, procedures, standards, rules, and regulations established by the Board (see [“Maintaining Diplomate Status”](#) below).
- 5) Certificates issued by the Board are not transferable and remain the property of the Board. Every person to whom a certificate has been properly issued shall be entitled to its continued possession unless and until such certificate is revoked.

## **Maintaining Diplomate Status:**

To maintain Diplomate status, Diplomates must:

- 1) Pay annual dues by January 1 each year. Payment must be made electronically via an invoice sent by the ABFA Treasurer.
- 2) Submit a signed Endorsement of **Professional and Ethical Standards** statement to the ABFA President by January 1 each year. This statement can be accessed through the **Policies and Procedures** page of the ABFA website.
- 3) Apply once each three (3) years for recertification by submitting documentation of forensic anthropology and professional development activities over the preceding thirty-six (36) months. The instructions accompanying the Application for Recertification must be followed to avoid delay in recertification.

## **Application to Sit for the Certification Examination in Forensic Anthropology Revised 27 April 2017**

### **Requirements of the Applicant:**

The applicant must:

- 1) Be a person of good moral character, high integrity, good repute, and must possess high ethical and professional standards;
- 2) Be a permanent resident of the United States, Canada, or their territories;
  - (a) Individuals, who are not permanent residents of the United States, Canada, or their territories, may petition the Board of Directors for a waiver to be considered to apply to sit for the board certification examination. The decision to consider this waiver is at the discretion of the Board of Directors.
  - (b) All correspondence and any associated documents must be in English.
- 3) Possess an earned doctoral degree in anthropology with an emphasis in physical/biological anthropology at the time of application. Note: The ABFA recognizes that a doctoral degree in anthropology may not be offered in some educational settings and consideration of other degrees will be assessed on a case by case basis. Decisions regarding waivers for the type of degree and the field of study will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

### **The Application Process:**

Individuals wishing to establish eligibility to sit for the examination for a Certificate of Qualification in Forensic Anthropology granted by the American Board of Forensic Anthropology should contact the current Application Committee Chairperson of the ABFA at:

[Application Committee Chair](#)

To foster impartiality in reviewing the case file portion of the application, the names and affiliations of applicants will not be associated with those documents when they are under review. Each applicant will be assigned a random identifier when they contact the Application Committee Chairperson. The applicant should use that random identifier on each page of the redacted case reports and any supporting documents in place of their name.

### **The Application:**

- 1) An original notarized copy of the application must be submitted by mail to the Application Chair. An individual who wishes to be considered for the examination must submit electronic versions of the entire application packet (including a digital copy of the notarized application) and the names of three (3) recommenders via email to the Application Committee Chair email address provided above.
- 2) The completed application must be received by April 1. The completed application includes:
  - a. Electronic versions of:
    - i. A copy of the notarized application;

- ii. Three (3) redacted forensic case files with supporting documents (see [Guidelines for Case File Submission](#));
  - iii. A copy of the applicant's doctoral diploma (or equivalent);
  - iv. A copy of the applicant's current *curriculum vitae*;
  - v. A copy of the applicant's training log, a record of the case work he/she has performed during his/her training and professional career. Note: the submission of a training log is recommended, not mandatory;
  - vi. A copy of the applicant's proficiency testing log, a record of the successful proficiency tests that the applicant has taken during his/her training. Note: the submission of a proficiency testing log is recommended, not mandatory;
  - vii. Three (3) letters of reference (see paragraph below for more information).
- b. Hard (paper) copies of:
    - i. All pages of the notarized application.
  - c. Three letters of recommendation. At least one recommender must be a Diplomate of the ABFA, and the recommenders must be from at least two different institutions. Each recommender must send a letter of recommendation directly to the Application Committee Chair of the ABFA. Email correspondence is preferred.
  - d. Payment of the non-refundable [application fee](#) must be made via an electronic invoice sent to each applicant by the ABFA Treasurer.
    - i. Applicants who do not pay the application fee in full prior to April 1 must defer their application until the following year.
- 3) The Application Chair will advise each applicant of the Board's decision by October 1 in the year that the application is received.
  - 4) The Board of Directors, at its discretion, may request additional information from the applicants or referees.
  - 5) The original applications and copies of any denial letters sent to unsuccessful applicants will be retained indefinitely. All associated materials such as the *curriculum vitae*, copy of the doctoral diploma, case reports, and letters of recommendation will be destroyed after three (3) years.
  - 6) Information in the application will remain strictly confidential. All Directors will destroy their paper copies or/delete electronic versions of the application materials within thirty (30) days after the vote to accept or reject an applicant.

### **Application Format:**

- 1) The application packet should include three case reports that were submitted to a medical examiner, coroner, law enforcement agency or other government agency. Information that could identify the author of the report (including logos, mention of the jurisdiction where the work was completed, case numbers/identifiers, names, signatures, initials, and any other information that might identify the applicant) must be redacted from the case reports and supporting materials. The ABFA Board of Directors will consider the redacted files for the purposes of maintaining objectivity in the review process. All submitted case-related materials should be redacted including the case report, the cover letter, the photographs, the diagrams and the bench notes. Any questions about the information to be redacted should be directed to the Application Committee Chair.
  - a. Mock cases may be submitted as long as the applicant provides detailed information regarding the provenience of the case and affirms that he/she had no prior knowledge of the case. Please see the Guidelines for [Case File Submission](#).

- 2) The applicant should be the single author for the case reports submitted for evaluation; however, the ABFA Board of Directors recognizes that in some instances multiple anthropologists may contribute to a final report. In such cases submit a separate statement indicating that the applicant was the primary author. When submitting a multiple-authored report, the specific role of the applicant must be clearly explained.
- 3) Supporting materials (redacted) must be included and should contain information that will allow the Board of Directors to ascertain whether appropriate methods were used to justify the conclusions reached by the author. Refer to the [Guidelines for Case File Submission](#).
- 4) Assign a number (#1, #2, #3) to each case report and supporting materials and write that case number as well as the randomly assigned identifier provided by the Application Committee Chair on each page of every case report and supporting materials before scanning it for the Board. This avoids complex numbering systems and facilitates discussion of each case by the Board of Directors. (NOTE: All *non-case-related* materials in the application, including the application, diploma, training/competency logs, and CV, must include the applicant's name. Applicants should NOT include their random identifier on these documents, as the Board of Directors reviews these two portions of the application separately.).

### **ABFA Guidelines for Case File Submission:**

Case file submission will demonstrate the applicant's involvement in forensic activities and his or her preparation to sit for the ABFA Board Certification Examination.

Submission requirements include electronic redacted copies of the following:

- 1) The written case report as it was issued by the applicant to their agency.
- 2) Submitted reports that reflect work done solely (or primarily) by the applicant.
- 3) A cover letter for each case file. Briefly outline case details, and also use this document to explain when the actual report varies from the ABFA guidelines. Explain circumstances such as co-signed reports or the absence of chain of custody information, scene and investigative information, and/or forensic analyses.
- 4) Bench notes for each case submitted.
- 5) Photographs for each case submitted. All photographs should be of good quality and should be labeled and/or captioned.
- 6) Printouts from software and statistical analyses (e.g., *FORDISC*), when applicable, demonstrating appropriate use of the program/method and interpretation of results should be submitted.

NOTE: All materials for a given case, including the cover letter, photos, bench notes, figures, printouts, chains of custody, and other supporting documents, must be submitted as a **single .pdf file** (i.e., one .pdf file for Case 1, one.pdf file for Case 2, etc.). Each applicant, therefore, should submit a total of three (3) .pdf files, each containing all information relative to a given case. Application-related files, such as the CV, diploma, and electronic copy of the application, may be submitted separately.

### **Overall:**

- 1) The three (3) submitted case files will serve to demonstrate the applicant's overall skill level. They allow the ABFA to evaluate the applicant's abilities in the subspecialties within forensic

anthropology as well as confirm their professional involvement in the discipline. Choose the cases carefully and take the time to prepare the application packet.

(a) Preferably, submit cases that contain nearly complete or complete skeletal/fleshed remains.

(b) As much as possible, submit three reports that contain the following analyses:

- i) Age at death
- ii) Sex
- iii) Ancestry
- iv) Stature
- v) Time since death
- vi) Perimortem trauma
- vii) Antemortem conditions
- viii) Postmortem/Taphonomic modifications

2) The written case report and supporting documentation are carefully scrutinized to ensure that the applicant is able to clearly, concisely and accurately relay the above information. The ABFA recognizes that case report formats differ according to jurisdictional requirements. The goal of the ABFA is to assess the applicant's ability across the spectrum of analyses utilized in forensic anthropology. Choose cases that include a full array of analysis. Do not submit more than one case dealing solely with trauma analysis (i.e., that does not include a biological profile, taphonomy or other components). The ABFA suggests particular attention to the following areas:

(a) Proper use of grammar and proofreading within the report. Choose past or present tense and be consistent. Keep all descriptions brief, direct and objective. Avoid non-specific language such as "tiny", "large" etc. Avoid jargon, slang, and vernacular or colloquial terms.

(b) Professionalism in the language of the report. The overall quality of the report should be commensurate with the level of education and experience attained.

(c) Citation of current and appropriate references. (Note: If the report format requirements preclude reference citations, note that in the cover letter and provide a supplementary document that lists the references utilized.)

(d) Descriptions of specific methods and observations. Statement of the methods used along with specific criteria should be either in the report or accompanying bench notes (e.g., pubic symphysis phase with a description of the relevant criteria and the reported mean or interval). Standards must be correctly applied and must be the most appropriate standards for the case.

(e) Organized, concise, clear, and factual reports. Ensure that the report is helpful (in the sense of providing clear, accurate, objective information) to the agency requesting it. For example, does it contain enough information regarding the biological profile to assist with identification? Is the trauma clearly interpreted rather than overly interpreted? Is the postmortem interval (PMI) estimate supportable?

(f) Co-signed reports. If the applicant works in a large agency or laboratory that has protocols for co-signing, this must be explained in the cover letter (e.g., an internal peer-review process in which the reviewer co-signs the final document, or a signature from a supervisor signifying an administrative review). Remember that submitted reports should reflect work done solely (or primarily) by the applicant.

(g) Chain of custody. If not mentioned in the written report, include information regarding "chain of custody" and legal authority for the examination in the cover letter.



- (h) Background/provenience information. If not mentioned in the written report, include information regarding the date of recovery of remains and investigative circumstances of the case in the cover letter.
- 3) Bench notes and photographs must be included in the application (information which could identify the applicant or institution should be redacted). Consider the following when reviewing bench notes and photographs for submitted cases:
  - (a) Bench notes are to be solely authored by the applicant.
  - (b) Discrepancies between the bench notes and reports must be explained in the cover letter.
  - (c) Redact initials, logos, and other identifiers from photographs and bench notes.
  - (d) Diagrams, photographs and illustrations should be clear and readable and contain the case number used for submission. A legend clearly outlining the symbols used must accompany all diagrams, if applicable.
  - (e) Each case must be accompanied by photographs including at least one view of the complete set of remains from an anterior view.
  - (f) Photographs of the elements or features used to assess the biological profile, postmortem interval, postmortem modification, and trauma (e.g., close-up photographs of pubic symphysis face, sternal rib end, and auricular surface) should be submitted to assist the Board of Directors in assessing the applicant's abilities. Photographs should clearly match the written descriptions. (Note: It is recognized that these photographs may not necessarily be part of the original report.)
  - (g) Photographs must be in focus and contain a clearly visible scale.
  - (h) All photographs must be labeled with descriptions.

#### **Additional Elements for Case File Submission:**

- 1) **Skeletal Inventory:** Complete a skeletal inventory listing all remains by element when possible (e.g., each rib is a separate element and should be sided and seriated when possible). Inventory can be listed as "all present" or "all absent" depending on the case and individual style. Reference only to a diagram or photograph is not an acceptable replacement.
- 2) **Postmortem Interval:** Contextual data and/or bone preservation data should be listed and the PMI, if estimated, must be supported by evidence and appropriate citations. The environment from which the remains were recovered should be clearly described. (Note: If the case was analyzed without knowledge of the field context, then this should be noted in the report or in the cover letter.)
- 3) **Sex:** When listing morphological traits, indicate their presentation (e.g., non-projecting mastoid processes). Supporting photographic evidence of each trait used in the analysis will help the Board of Directors assess the applicant's abilities.
- 4) **Ancestry:**
  - (a) Statistical program (e.g., *FORDISC*) and current analytical methods must be used and interpreted appropriately. Associated statistical values must be documented in the case report or bench notes. Do not use a blanket statement such as "*FORDISC* indicates that this is a White individual."
  - (b) Morphological traits listed as supporting a particular ancestry should be established through appropriate citations.
  - (c) Supporting photographic evidence of various views of the cranium or skull will help the Board of Directors assess the applicant's abilities.
- 5) **Age:**

- (a) Criteria and skeletal elements used must be stated (e.g., right 4<sup>th</sup> rib sternal end with a deep V-shaped pit) and appropriate references should be cited. Submit supporting photographic evidence of each trait used in the analysis to help the Board of Directors assess the applicant's abilities.
  - (b) Tests performed for age estimation should be the most probative available given the condition and completeness of remains.
  - (c) Synthesis of the results from multiple tests should be clear and rational to the reader of the report.
- 6) Stature:**
- (a) Conclusions should be solidly based on appropriate use of standards and references and appropriate interpretation of results.
  - (b) In the absence of information regarding sex and ancestry, a justification for the stature model(s) selected should be provided.
- 7) Trauma:**
- (a) Trauma documentation must include measurements, appropriate interpretation, and photographic documentation. All defects should have their location within the skeleton clearly described (such as using measurements from at least two anatomical landmarks). Supporting photographic evidence of each trait used in the analysis will help the Board of Directors assess the applicant's abilities.
  - (b) The type of trauma should be stated, if appropriate (e.g., consistent with blunt force, sharp force, or projectile/GSW).
  - (c) Trauma description should be succinct.
  - (d) The method(s) of evaluation should be stated (e.g., radiographic, gross, microscopic).
  - (e) Do not make statements regarding cause and manner of death.
- 8) Postmortem Modifications:** Do not over-interpret results. Statements such as "postmortem modification is caused by carnivores or rodents" must be supported and use proper taphonomic terminology.
- 9) Conclusions:**
- (a) Conclusions should summarize the overall findings in the report, be appropriate to the evidence presented, and be supported through careful documentation.
  - (b) No conclusions should be drawn or analysis performed outside of the expertise of the analyst or the field of forensic anthropology.

**Reapplication Procedure:**

- 1) The decision of the Board of Directors to accept or reject an applicant is based on a majority vote and is final.
- 2) If denied, in order to reapply, the applicant must submit a new application packet and the application fee.
- 3) Reuse of any material(s) in a reapplication is allowed only through written permission by the Application Chair and only within a three year period.
- 4) In most circumstances, new letters of recommendation must be submitted. However, if the Application Chair receives a written request from the re-applicant, existing letters of recommendation may be reused at the discretion of the Application Chair.
- 5) New case reports for review will be required as part of the reapplication process. Exceptions may be granted if (a) the only criticism from the Board involved the lack of supporting documentation, and (b) the reapplication occurs in the year following the original denial.

- 6) If an applicant is denied a second time, he or she may not submit a third application for the following year. The applicant is encouraged to gain additional mentorship and training in the interim. After at least one full year has elapsed since notification of the second denial, the applicant will be allowed to submit a third application. If, after a total of three attempts, the applicant is still not approved to sit for the certification exam, he or she may not reapply without petitioning the ABFA Board of Directors for permission. In the petition the applicant must clearly demonstrate that they have taken substantive measures to rectify any deficiencies, including but not limited to additional formal training, coursework, and supervision and mentoring by a board-certified forensic anthropologist.

## **The Certification Examination in Forensic Anthropology Revised 18 February 2020**

### **Examination Committees:**

The ABFA Examination Committees consist of the Examination Development Committee, Examination Validation Committee, and the Examination Grading Committee. The Examination Committees are charged with administering the examination, including creating, proctoring, and grading.

The Examination Development Committee is responsible for creating the examination and examination key. The Examination Development committee will be responsible for soliciting new written examination questions or creating new questions as needed. The Examination Development Committee will submit all new written exam questions to the Examination Validation Committee. The Examination Development Committee will develop the practical exam. The Examination Validation Committee shall review the entire examination prior to its finalization. Members of the Examination Development and Examination Validation Committees will be responsible for proctoring the written and practical examinations.

The Chair of the Examination Development Committee will communicate the location and time of the examination to all examinees, and respond to all examinee questions regarding the content or administration of the examination. The Chair of the Examination Development committee will also communicate the exam results to examinees.

Members of the Examination Grading Committee will not be involved in creating or proctoring the exam. Also, they will not be involved in communications with the examinees prior to or following the exam. The only task assigned to the Examination Grading Committee members is the grading of the practical portion of the examination. They will grade the practical portion of the examination following the established examination key (after its validation by the Examination Validation Committee).

All members of the Examination Committees will sign a Confidentiality Agreement prohibiting them from discussing the examination content, examinees, or examination results outside the Examination Committees or ABFA Board of Directors.

### **The Certification Examination:**

- 1) The ABFA examination consists of a multiple-choice test and a practical test. It is designed to test the examinee's breadth and depth of knowledge in the field of forensic anthropology. For the multiple-choice examination, the examinee must be familiar with the forensic anthropology literature. This literature includes, but is not limited to, pertinent forensic journals and texts that are applicable to the practicing forensic anthropologist. While the examinee must be well-versed in current literature, seminal works should not be ignored.
  - a. In general, the multiple-choice questions cover, but are not limited to, the following areas:
    - i. Methods to establish the biological profile
    - ii. Trauma interpretation and biomechanical principles
    - iii. Anatomy, bone growth and development, osteology and bone histology
    - iv. Pathological conditions
    - v. Postmortem alterations
    - vi. Individualizing skeletal characteristics

- vii. Taphonomy and postmortem interval
  - viii. Scene processing
  - ix. Evidence handling, court procedures and legal concerns
  - x. History of forensic anthropology
  - xi. Identification
  - xii. Statistical analyses
  - xiii. Human/nonhuman classification and medicolegal significance
  - xiv. Standards and guidelines related to the practice of forensic anthropology (e.g., SWGANTH and OSAC)
- b. The practical portion of the examination consists of hands-on stations. Each station will provide the necessary equipment, standards, and guidance to complete the station. Also, magnifying glasses and penlights are available to the examinees during the practical examination. Examinees should read each station's instructions carefully and be sure to address all components, but do only what each station asks.
- i. The examination will assess the examinee's ability to apply his or her specific body of knowledge and skills to actual skeletal and dental material and, in some instances, radiographs.
  - ii. The examinee will demonstrate critical reasoning abilities and appropriate methods and experience to reach an organized, substantive answer to each question.
  - iii. The stations will test the examinee's competence in areas such as the determination of age, ancestry, sex, and stature, craniometrics, dental development, dental charting, minimum number of individuals, trauma recognition and interpretation, pathological conditions (providing a differential diagnosis), human versus nonhuman, analytical programs (e.g., *FORDISC*), taphonomy and radiographic assessment. The test may involve these examples, but is not limited to them.
- 2) The exam is typically scheduled during the Monday of the week of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences Annual Meeting. The starting and ending times and the lunch schedule will be provided to the examinees by the Vice President prior to the examination.
  - 3) The examination will be administered in an area that provides an appropriate environment for the written and practical portions.
  - 4) An examinee must notify the Vice President of his/her intent to take the examination by December 1 of the calendar year that precedes the examination date.
  - 5) An examinee may choose to postpone the examination without reapplying or paying for the examination that year. The examinee must notify the Vice President of his/her intent to postpone by December 1 each and every year he/she chooses to postpone. After three years of consecutive postponements, the examinee must reapply. The examinee may also be required to reapply if he/she fails to notify the Vice President of his/her intent.
  - 6) The examination [fee](#) must be remitted by December 1 of the year prior to taking the exam. Payment must be made electronically through the ABFA website. If the examinee fails to remit the examination fee by the deadline, he or she will not be allowed to take the examination the following year.
  - 7) Examinees are not permitted to bring reference materials or analytical aids (such as handlenses, calipers, or lights) to the examination. During the examination, examinees will have access to appropriate standards and other materials. A list of standards and materials is available from the Vice President upon request.

**Grading:**

- 1) To foster impartiality in grading, the names of the examinees will not be associated with their answers until all the exams are graded.
- 2) An 80% grade is required on each section of the examination (80% or higher on the practical and 80% or higher on the multiple choice) in order to obtain ABFA certification.
- 3) The Vice President will notify the examinees of examination results no later than March 31 of the year in which the exam is taken.

**Re-examination:**

- 1) If the examinee fails one or both section(s) of the examination, he or she may retake the failed section(s) a total of three times. The examination fee must be paid prior to each and every attempt.
- 2) The examinee must retake all failed sections of the examination during the following attempt.
- 3) The examinee may retake the examination the following year or may postpone for one year. The examinee must notify the Vice President of his or her intent to retake the examination or to postpone by December 1 of the calendar year prior to the exam. The examinee may be required to reapply if he or she fails to notify the Vice President of his or her intent.
- 4) Examinees wishing to retake failed sections of the examination beyond three attempts must petition the Board of Directors in writing for consideration. The petition letter must be submitted to the ABFA Secretary prior to September 1.

**Special Accommodations:**

- 1) In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, the ABFA will provide reasonable accommodations for applicants with disabilities. Applicants should refer to these laws for more information regarding protected disabilities and applicable accommodations.
- 2) Documentation of an applicant's disability must be in writing and must be signed by a licensed or otherwise credentialed and appropriately qualified medical, psychological, or learning professional. Documentation should provide a specific diagnosis and description of the desired accommodation; it must also be dated and include the name, title, professional credentials, address, phone number, and signature of the person making the diagnosis and recommendation. The ABFA will protect such information in accordance with established law but reserves the right to verify the disability and to request additional information if necessary. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 3) The disability documentation, description of the desired accommodation, and specific request for such accommodation must be provided to the ABFA Vice President no later than December 1 of the year prior to taking the exam. The ABFA Board of Directors will consider and approve or deny all requests for accommodation and will issue a decision within 60 calendar days of receipt of the request. The ABFA will strive to make accommodations at no cost to the applicant; however, applicants may be asked to bear some or all of the cost of accommodation and/or to make the necessary arrangements, depending on the specific service(s) or modification(s) requested.
- 4) The ABFA will make every effort to honor requests for testing accommodations. However, if requests for accommodation are incompletely documented or received after the deadline, the applicant may be asked to take the test without the requested accommodation or defer the examination to a later date. Furthermore, accommodation requests will not be granted if they present an undue burden on the ABFA, provide an advantage over other candidates, or alter the ABFA's ability to measure fundamental skills or knowledge that the examination is designed to

test.

- 5) If a request for special accommodation is denied either in part or full, an applicant may appeal the decision. A letter describing the applicant's objection along with additional medical documentation (if appropriate) must be received by the Vice President within 60 calendar days after receipt of notification. A final decision will be made by the Board of Directors within 60 calendar days of receipt of the appeal.

### **Examination Appeal Process**

The American Board of Forensic Anthropology is committed to ensuring that candidates for certification have access to an appeal concerning the certification examinations. If an examinee chooses to appeal the ABFA Examination Committee decision (i.e., due to failure of an examination), the examinee must appeal in writing and clearly delineate each area of contention.

#### 1) Scope of Appeal

- (a) **Appealable Issues:** Candidates may appeal to the ABFA to raise concerns relative to the examination's administration (e.g., alleged bias/prejudice of a member of an examination committee or failure to follow established examination procedures) or to raise concerns of inappropriate conduct during the examination (e.g., use of unauthorized information or aids). Candidates may also request that examination grades be recalculated to confirm accuracy of the overall score.
- (b) **Non-Appealable Issues:** The ABFA validates all test questions. As such, the ABFA will not consider appeals based on examination content or the sufficiency or accuracy of answers given to examination questions.

#### 2) Procedure for Appeal

- (a) In order to appeal the examination outcome, a candidate must set forth the basis for his/her appeal by submitting a letter via certified mail with return receipt requested to the ABFA President within thirty (30) days of the notification of a failed examination. Appeals postmarked after the thirty (30) day period will not be considered.
- (b) The appellant must select a Diplomate-at-Large to represent him/her throughout the appeal process. A Diplomate-at-Large is any ABFA Diplomate in good standing who is not currently serving on the Board of Directors. The name of the Diplomate-at-Large must be included in the appeal letter. If the appellant does not choose a representative from the Diplomates-at-Large, one will be appointed by the Chair of the Exam Appeal Committee.
- (c) Upon receipt of the letter, the President will promptly notify the ABFA Board of Directors of the appeal request.

#### 3) Decision of Appeal

- (a) The Exam Appeal Committee will review the appellant's letter and make a decision about the validity of the claim(s) and the appropriate course of action. Discussions regarding the appeal by the committee will normally be handled via a conference call.
- (b) Decisions regarding the appeal will be determined by a majority vote of the Exam Appeal Committee.
- (c) The Exam Appeal Committee Chair will notify the ABFA President of the outcome. The ABFA President will review the Exam Appeal Committee's decision to ensure compliance with the ABFA's appeal policies and procedures and will notify the Board of

Directors of the outcome. After approval by the ABFA President, the Exam Appeal Committee Chair will also respond to the appellant in writing via a certified letter within ninety (90) days of the date of receipt of the appeal. The response to the appellant will address each point raised in the appeal.

- (d) The decisions of the Exam Appeal Committee are final and are not subject to further appeals.

**Diplomate of the ABFA:**

Successful completion of both portions of the examination will qualify the individual as a Diplomate of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology and entitle him/her to use the initials D-ABFA after his/her name. Diplomates are issued a unique certificate number, issued in numerical order. Certificate numbers are never reused. New Diplomate names and contact information will be added to the ABFA website by September 1 following their qualification. Diplomate certificates will be awarded at the next annual ABFA meeting in February. If necessary, verification of Diplomate status prior to awarding of the certificate may be obtained from the ABFA President.

The President of the Board has the pleasure of presenting the Certificate of Qualification in Forensic Anthropology to successful examinees at the next annual meeting of the Diplomates.

A list of Diplomates (current, deceased, retired, suspended) is on the ABFA website.



## **Recertification Revised 29 March 2020**

# **American Board of Forensic Anthropology Recertification Procedure**

## **1 Purpose**

Recertification (i.e., maintenance of certification) is required by the American Board of Forensic Anthropology (ABFA) as a means of demonstrating continued education and maintenance of skills in forensic anthropology and related forensic sciences. This document describes the procedures for ABFA recertification.

## **2 Scope**

This procedure applies to all Active Members of the ABFA seeking recertification or retirement status.

## **3 Terms and Definitions**

**3.1 Certificate of Qualification (also called a Certificate):** a certificate awarded upon successful completion of the ABFA Examination, signifying that the recipient is a qualified Diplomate of the ABFA.

**3.2 Decertification (also called Lapse in Certification):** the invalidation of a Certificate due to failure to comply with recertification procedures or annual requirements (see section 4.1).

**3.3 Recertification:** the process of maintaining active ABFA certification.

## **4 Recertification Requirements**

**4.1 A Certificate of Qualification (“Certificate”)** issued by the ABFA remains valid for three (3) years. The following are required for recertification (i.e., to maintain active certification status):

4.1.1 Pay annual dues by January 1 each year.

4.1.2 Submit a signed Adherence to Ethical and Professional Standards attestation by March 1 each year.

4.1.3 Submit a Recertification Form by April 1 during the recertification year, achieving a point total of 100 or greater.

## **5 Recertification Procedure**

Initial certification and recertification are valid for three (3) years and expire on July 1 of the third year of the certification. To maintain active certification status, recertification is required in three-year increments from the current certification or recertification. Upon initial certification, each new diplomate is placed in a recertification cycle, designated as Cycle A, B, or C. Therefore, the recertification cycle is determined based on the year a Certificate was first conferred. For example, Cycle A includes Certificate conferral years 2010,

2013, 2016; Cycle B includes Certificate conferral years 2011, 2014, 2017; Cycle C includes Certificate conferral years 2012, 2015, 2018.

**5.1** A Recertification Form must be submitted by April 1 for the appropriate recertification cycle.

5.1.1 A late fee will be imposed on Recertification Forms received after April 1. Additional late fees will be imposed on Recertification Forms received after May 1 and June 1 unless an extension is granted.

5.1.2 The Chairperson of the Recertification Committee will send a reminder by email by February 1 each year to all Diplomates requiring recertification that year to maintain active status.

**5.2** The Recertification Form will document forensic anthropological activity for the three calendar years prior to the expiration of the current certificate. For example, for a Certificate expiring in 2019, a Recertification Form submitted April 1 of 2019 documents activity for calendar years 2016, 2017, and 2018.

5.2.1 For the first recertification following initial certification, the Recertification Form will document activity for the three calendar years prior to the expiration of the certification, which may include activity prior to initial certification. Activity prior to initial certification may be applied toward the first recertification.

**5.3** The Recertification Form will document involvement in forensic anthropological activity in the following areas:

5.3.1 Employment

5.3.2 Professional Involvement

5.3.3 Professional Development Activities

5.3.4 Publications

**5.4** The Recertification Form will be evaluated by the Recertification Committee to determine eligibility for recertification.

5.4.1 The evaluation of the Recertification Form will be based on appropriateness of documented forensic anthropological activity and achieving a point total of 100 or greater.

5.4.2 The Recertification Committee will recommend to the Board of Directors whether recertification is accepted or rejected.

**5.5** Upon approval by the Board of Directors, the Diplomate will be considered recertified, and a new Certificate will be issued. The new Certificate will be valid for three (3) years.

## **6 Lapse in Certification (Decertification)**

**6.1** A lapse in certification may occur under the following conditions:

- 6.1.1 Failure to submit annual dues by January 1 of each year will result in notification from the Treasurer of the Board of noncompliance with recertification requirements. Following notification, failure to submit annual dues within thirty (30) days will result in a lapse in certification.
- 6.1.2 Failure to submit the signed Adherence to Ethical and Professional Standards attestation by March 1 of each year will result in notification from the President of the Board of noncompliance with recertification requirements. Following notification, failure to submit the attestation within thirty (30) days will result in a lapse in certification.
- 6.1.3 Failure to submit the Recertification Form by April 1 of the appropriate cycle year will result in notification from the Chairperson of the Recertification Committee of noncompliance with recertification requirements. Following notification, failure to submit the Recertification Form within sixty (60) days will result in a lapse in certification.

**6.2** The Recertification Committee, at its discretion, may grant an extension to the above deadlines.

**6.3** Upon a lapse in certification (under 1 year), the Certificate becomes invalid. Certification may be reinstated when all of the following conditions are met:

- 6.3.1 annual dues are paid;
- 6.3.2 the Adherence to Ethical and Professional Standards attestation is submitted;
- 6.3.3 the Recertification Form is submitted, with a total of 100 points or greater;
- 6.3.4 a reinstatement fee equal to the current application fee is submitted; and
- 6.3.5 the Recertification Committee recommends recertification, which is then approved by the Board of Directors.

**6.4** A lapse of certification over 1 year may result in the Board of Directors requiring the individual to re-apply to sit for the certification exam and submit the associated fees.

## **7 Retirement Status**

**7.1** Retirement status may be requested by a Diplomate who:

- 7.1.1 has held a Certificate for at least ten years, and
- 7.1.2 is in good standing at the time of the request for retirement status.

**7.2** Medical retirement may be granted to a Diplomate who:

- 7.2.1 has a medical condition that inhibits or prohibits the activities required for recertification; and

7.2.2 who does not meet the retirement status requirements described in 7.1.

**7.3** Retirement requests must be submitted to the Secretary and/or the President of the Board of Directors in writing.

**7.4** Retirement status is granted by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Retirement requests may be voted upon by The Board of Directors at any time during the year.

**7.5** The following apply to ABFA retirement status:

7.5.1 The retiree may cease payment of annual dues.

7.5.2 The retiree may cease recertification procedures.

7.5.3 The retiree may use the designation “D-ABFA (retired).”

7.5.4 The retiree may continue to attend Diplomate meetings.

7.5.5 The retiree may not sit on the Board of Directors.

7.5.6 The retiree may not vote on any matter before the Board or Diplomates.

7.5.7 The retiree may not state that he or she is currently Board Certified or that he or she currently holds a Certificate of Qualification from the ABFA.

7.5.8 Retirement status cannot be applied retroactively (i.e., granted for some previous date).

7.5.9 Retirement is irrevocable except by a subsequent finding by the Board of Directors that the Diplomate was not in good standing at the time of retirement.

7.5.10 If an action taken or not taken by the Diplomate prior to retirement is adjudicated after retirement and exposes ethical violations or other violations of Codes of Conduct, retirement status may be revoked and, at the discretion of the Board, the Diplomate may be decertified.

7.5.11 If a retired Diplomate decides wishes to be reinstated as an “active” Diplomate, they must reapply to take the certification exam and submit associated fees.